



R E P R E S E N T A T I V E R U S H H O L T

Report To Monmouth County

MARCH 2004

Dear Friend:

Monmouth County is a center of activity in New Jersey and globally. Companies and employees in Monmouth County are rising to the challenges posed by the presently uncertain economy, and local entrepreneurs are leading the way in developing and marketing innovative technologies. At a time when job creation is slower than it should be, we need policies that support our local businesses and help provide meaningful benefits to their employees (see related story).

More globally, men and women serving at Fort Monmouth are developing technologies that protect American soldiers from harm and make them more effective in their jobs. As another round of base-closures approaches in 2005, we need to ensure that Fort Monmouth is strengthened and protected in its competition against similar military facilities (see related story).

Monmouth County is also contributing its sons and daughters to active military, Reserve, and National Guard units that are on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is a difficult time for them and their families, and Congress must give them the logistical, financial, and strategic support they need so their service is successful, safe, and brief.

There is much work to be done in Washington, and the articles in this newsletter describe just some of the issues I am working on. In addition to the issues touched upon here, I am also working hard to create jobs and spur economic development, improve our public schools, provide a meaningful prescription drug benefit through Medicare, and ensure that all of our communities have clean air, clean water, and convenient, clean transportation.

In order for me to give voice to your specific concerns, I need to hear from you. Please come talk with me at one of my upcoming community meetings, and feel free to contact me by letter (address below), e-mail (through my web site at www.holt.house.gov) or phone (toll free at 1-87-RUSH-HOLT).

I hope this newsletter is helpful, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Rush Holt
Member of Congress

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E-Mail (through my web site): www.holt.house.gov

Advocating for Fort Monmouth

www.holt.house.gov

I am working with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make sure that Fort Monmouth remains an active, vibrant contributor to the military and our community. Since 1988, the military has gone through four rounds of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), and the Department of Defense has announced that the next round of closures will be announced in 2005.

Fort Monmouth is home to some of the military's most innovative research and development. If America is going to send her men and women in uniform overseas, we must make sure we give them the support and equipment they need – indeed, that we give them every advantage. Communications technology developed at the Fort is enabling our soldiers all over the world to deliver the right force, to the right place, at the right time. Fort Monmouth is making our soldiers safer and more effective.

The upcoming BRAC review will be a tough fight, but Fort Monmouth is strong. For several years, we have been working to expand its mission and

improve its technological capability. Most recently, we were able to secure \$1,000,000 for communications improvements that will upgrade the Fort's already exceptional R&D facility, and \$20,000,000 to help renovate barracks and other facilities.

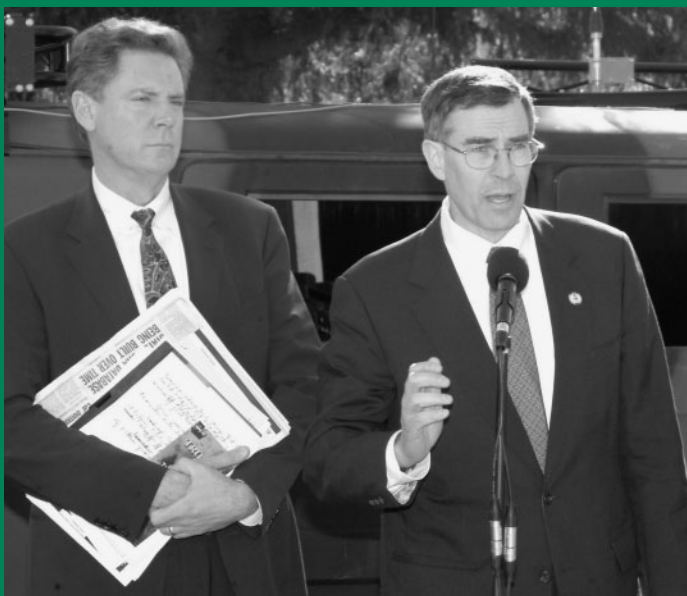
Fort Monmouth is important not only for the military's readiness, it is also a critical part of our local economy. With more than 5,500 military and civilian employees, Fort Monmouth is the largest employer in Monmouth County. According to the New Jersey Commerce and Economic Growth Commission, the Fort also supports 22,000 jobs statewide, and produces a total economic impact of \$2.5 billion. Preparing for the BRAC process is not only smart military strategy, it is essential economic policy. ▀

Rep. Holt, right, stands before an Army battlefield command vehicle during a recent tour of Fort Monmouth. During the tour, Rush and others viewed a demonstration of equipment now being used in Iraq and Afghanistan. Rep. Frank Pallone is on the left.

DID YOU KNOW ?

Technology developed at Fort Monmouth is helping soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan in their daily missions, including:

- **Radar that allows U.S. soldiers to locate the source of enemy fire and return fire before the enemy's shell has landed.**
- **Radio-signal blocking equipment that disrupts the activation of roadside bombs.**
- **Jamming technology that confuses guidance systems on enemy missiles headed toward U.S. helicopters.**



Supporting Businesses and Entrepreneurs

www.holt.house.gov

Entrepreneurs are a critical part of our local economy. Very often, small companies and the self-employed are just getting off the ground when they must confront exceedingly high costs of health care. In December, when I chaired a regional economic summit called *Einstein's Alley*, I heard from local business and community leaders that we need solutions that help both employers and employees.

One possible solution to providing health coverage is the "Small Employer and Farmer Health Benefits Program Act" (H.R. 2850). If passed, this bill would provide small businesses the opportunity to buy into a health benefits program that is similar to the one enjoyed by federal employees. Not only would this enable small businesses to pay less for health coverage by purchasing at reduced group rates, it would give employees access to benefits that are equal to or better than the options offered to federal employees.

Specifically, H.R. 2850 would authorize the use of \$50 billion to establish a Small Business Health Benefits Plan (SBHBP) within the U.S. Department of Labor with the following features:

- All companies with fewer than 100 employees would be eligible to apply for coverage. (Employers with fewer than 25 employees would be eligible for an incentive of 5% to join.)



Rush listens to local business and community leaders during "Einstein's Alley: The Economic Summit," an initiative to promote innovation and create jobs in central New Jersey.

- All employees who have completed three months of service would be eligible to sign-up for coverage.
- Employers and employees would share premium costs, but employers could pay no less than 50%.

According to the House Small Business Committee, businesses that generate less than \$5 million in gross annual receipts create between 2/3 and 3/4 of all new jobs and constitute 99% of all employers. Supporting them is the best way to create new jobs and spur economic growth. ▀

Making a College Education More Affordable

Getting a college education has never been more important – or more expensive. Since 1980, tuition and fees for a four-year college degree have risen 115% over inflation, while median household income has risen only 20%. In other words, the cost of a college education has risen at a rate far faster than families' ability to pay.

Every New Jersey child who has the desire and educational preparation to go to college should have the opportunity to do so. College is still the best investment a

high school graduate can make. That is why I introduced the "Higher Education Affordability and Fairness Act," a bill to make higher education expenses tax deductible.

The "Higher Education Affordability and Fairness Act" would permit families to deduct up to \$10,000 in tuition, room & board, and other expenses for each student, every year they are in school. If parents have more than one child in college simultaneously, the bill allows deductions up to \$15,000 per year. ▀

Community Meetings

www.holt.house.gov

Please come join me at one of my upcoming meetings to discuss issues affecting our community.

Financial Aid Workshop

March 27, 2004

9:00 a.m.

Monmouth Regional High School
1 Norman J. Field Way, Tinton Falls

Come learn about how to finance a college education at this workshop, presented in conjunction with the Sallie Mae Fund.

Town Hall Meeting

March 27, 2004

2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Eatontown Borough
Community Center
58 Monmouth Road,
Eatontown

Special town hall meeting to discuss community efforts regarding Fort Monmouth and the upcoming round of base closures.

Constituent Service

I work to provide all residents of New Jersey's 12th District with a range of useful services. For example, I assist thousands of constituents each year as they deal with problems associated with the IRS, the Social Security Administration, the Veterans Affairs Administration, the Small Business Administration, the U.S. Postal Service, and dozens of other federal agencies. Please contact me if you are dealing with a problem and you think I may be able to help. I have attached a cut-out card below so you can keep my contact information near your phone or on your refrigerator.

Representative Rush Holt

As your Congressman, I am here to help. Contact me any time.

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Official Business

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